

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GAPS camp in Stellenbosch launches final push towards Glasgow 2026

- 49 para-athletes and coaches from Africa attend Stellenbosch GAPS camp
- Para-athletic qualification opportunities available for the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games
- First of three GAPS camps taking place ahead of Glasgow 2026

Monday 23 March 2026: Stellenbosch University is hosting the first Commonwealth Sport GAPS camp of 2026, bringing together 49 Para athletes and coaches from across Africa for elite training and competition opportunities.

34 Para Athletics athletes and coaches from Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo and Uganda arrived in Stellenbosch on 23 March and are preparing for a series of Glasgow 2026 qualification events starting on 28 March.

15 (10 athletes and five coaches) Para powerlifters from Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda, who have already qualified for Glasgow, will take part in supervised training during the day and evening sessions focused on areas including recovery and wellbeing. Athletes attending the camp include Kenya's Hellen Wawira Kariuka, a bronze medallist at Birmingham 2022.

The GAPS camps provide expert training and support to Para athletes from across the Commonwealth as well as training future coaches who may have faced barriers in their careers. Paralympic bronze medallist Sheryl James, who set a Commonwealth Games record in the women's T37 100m at Birmingham 2022, will attend as a coach, supporting young South African sprinter Masala Makatu.

In 2022, eight GAPS athletes went on to win medals at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, including Nigeria's Goodness Nwachukwu who won gold in women's Discus F42, setting a new world record in the process.

Commonwealth Sport CEO Katie Sadleir said, "The GAPS programme is incredibly important to Commonwealth Sport. With Glasgow 2026 just over 100 days away, the GAPS camps offer our athletes and coaches support in their qualification journey or simply their sporting journey.

"It's incredible to see the impact that sport can have and the opportunities it provides, with athletes like Sheryl James returning to GAPS as a coach and helping to inspire the next generation of Para athletes."

South Africa's Charl du Toit, Birmingham 2022 silver medallist at Friends of GAPS said, "I had the pleasure of being a GAPS athlete back in 2022. GAPS is an amazing opportunity where athletes can come, learn, develop and get the opportunity to learn from each other in a high-performance setup.

“To all the athletes who are part of the GAPS programme heading into the 2026 Commonwealth Games, enjoy the journey, appreciate the people around you and go make wonderful memories.”

Maties Sport Chief Director, Ilhaam Groenewald said, “At Stellenbosch University and Maties Sport, our Vision 2040 calls us to lead with purpose, inclusivity, and impact. Hosting the 2026 edition of the GAPS Camp is not only important to meet our memorandum of understanding requirements, but it is also a powerful expression of our commitment, creating a platform where para-athletes and future coaches can overcome barriers, access world-class support, and realise their potential. Through this initiative, we continue to position sport as a catalyst for transformation, empowerment, and societal change.”

Additional GAPS camps will take place across the Commonwealth in 2026, including an Oceania camp hosted by Griffith University in Australia in May and a Caribbean and Americas programme supporting athletes competing at Velocity Fest in Jamaica. The programme will conclude with an international camp in July ahead of the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

Through its network of training camps and partnerships, the GAPS programme is strengthening Para sport systems across the Commonwealth. By supporting athletes and coaches from developing and emerging nations, it expands opportunities across a wider range of Para disciplines, improves performance pathways and contributes to greater diversity at major international events. Since 2018, over 700 athletes and coaches have taken part in GAPS camps.

The programme is made possible through the support of the Commonwealth Sport Foundation, whose funding helps remove barriers to participation and strengthen Para sport pathways across the Commonwealth.

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